



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Employment and Learning

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Departmental Briefing — Departmental response to the recommendations made in the Committee Inquiry into CEIAG in Northern Ireland and the Terms of Reference for the Departmental Review of Careers in Northern Ireland

26 February 2014

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Departmental Briefing — Departmental response to the Recommendations made in the Committee Inquiry into CEIAG in Northern Ireland and the Terms of Reference for the Departmental Review of Careers in Northern Ireland

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Robin Swann (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sammy Douglas
Mr Phil Flanagan
Mr David Hilditch
Mr Chris Lyttle
Mr Fra McCann
Ms Bronwyn McGahan
Mr Pat Ramsey
Mr Alastair Ross

Witnesses:

Mr Michael Gould	Department for Employment and Learning
Ms Frances O'Hara	Department for Employment and Learning
Dr David Hughes	Department of Education

The Deputy Chairperson: I welcome Ms Frances O'Hara, the head of Careers Service delivery in the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL); Mr Michael Gould, the assistant director of the skills and industry division in DEL; and Dr David Hughes, the director of the curriculum, qualifications and standards directorate in the Department of Education (DE). You have up to 10 minutes to give us a brief overview, and then we will put questions to you. Over to you.

Mr Michael Gould (Department for Employment and Learning): Thank you, Chairman and members. We welcome the invitation to outline the plans for the careers review. We want to go through how we propose to build on the work of the Committee and its report, which was published in November. We view that report as a rich and quality data source, which is full of evidence for us. In recent days, you received our response on the detail of your recommendations and how we propose to take things forward. I will ask David and Frances to go through the recommendations and our response to them. Perhaps we can then move on to talk about the terms of reference for the review and the way forward. If you are content, Chair, I will hand over to David and Frances to look at the individual recommendations.

The Deputy Chairperson: Yes. Go ahead.

Ms Frances O'Hara (Department for Employment and Learning): Chair, if you are content, we will go through each of the recommendations in turn.

The Deputy Chairperson: I think that we are easy with that. Go ahead.

Ms O'Hara: Recommendation 1 looks at the statutory duty under the title of "developing a consistent approach". The thrust of the recommendation is the request to examine the benefits of introducing a statutory mechanism to ensure a consistent approach and a high-quality service across schools, colleges and universities. David wants to say something about the DE position on that.

Dr David Hughes (Department of Education): I start from the position that a statutory responsibility is set out in the curriculum to provide careers education. With that already in place, and with the role of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) including careers education in its inspections, that responsibility is strongly underpinned in the curriculum to ensure that it is being delivered. The question that the Committee raised about an overarching statutory duty — I note that reference is made to proposals in England — needs to be looked at in the context of the review of the current careers strategy, and that will provide a valuable input into any consideration.

The Deputy Chairperson: Members, do you have any questions on recommendation 1?

Mr Lyttle: I appreciate your comments on the recommendation. Do you think that there is an inconsistent approach across schools and colleges at present?

Dr Hughes: From inspections that include careers education, the ETI demonstrates that the quality will vary. Quality has improved significantly since that became a required part of every inspection. When some schools are evaluated as having outstanding careers education and others are evaluated as having merely satisfactory careers education, that difference in quality is being shown up.

The level of difference in approach, input, access to resources, and so on, is likely to be quite minimal, in the sense that there is a unity in the curriculum, there are connections between schools on how careers is taught, careers education is one of the strategic priorities in each area learning community, and there are careers subgroups in each one. There are many mechanisms for evening the way in which careers education is provided in schools. The level of difference that might exist in other jurisdictions does not necessarily exist. However, there will be some differences.

Mr Lyttle: One of the key findings in our inquiry — members might agree with me — is that there seems to be an inconsistency in approach. I recall testimonies in which people suggested that the approach depends on the extent to which the leadership of a school sees it as a priority issue rather than any system that is in place to ensure consistency of delivery. The review's findings on that will be interesting.

Some fantastic careers work is going on, but one of the biggest issues in the feedback to our inquiry was inconsistency and an over-reliance on the leadership and discretion of a school over the budget allocated for careers guidance and how much time is spent on it.

The Deputy Chairperson: Inconsistency across the areas bugged this Committee, because as the inquiry progressed, we discovered that schools were doing so many different things, and it just did not tally. Unless we have consistency, this inquiry is a waste of time — that may be the wrong terminology. Unless we have consistency across the entire area, we will not have achieved what we set out to. That needs to be looked at thoroughly to ensure consistency.

Mr Lyttle: That begs a question about how the Department of Education will be involved in the review. As our inquiry found, a lot of the issues are as much the Department of Education's responsibility as DEL's, and responsibility as the agency for change rests as much with the Department of Education as it does with the Department for Employment and Learning. Perhaps you could comment on where that comes into play in the review.

Dr Hughes: The existing careers strategy is jointly owned by the two Departments, and the review will be done jointly with the intention that any successor strategy will also be a joint strategy. There is no doubt that it is recognised that there is joint responsibility.

Mr P Ramsey: I am going to try to cut to the chase, particularly on recommendation 1. I am keen to see the template and the guidelines for DEL officials for careers guidance to young people.

Ms O'Hara: Do you mean the template for what schools expect of them?

Mr P Ramsey: As the Deputy Chair said, the Committee had a painstaking and intensive inquiry into careers guidance. The inquiry found that the key areas that we should be encouraging people into are STEM subjects, ICT and various other areas. I want to walk through what you are going to do as a result of that inquiry. What are your careers people going to give to young people?

Mr Gould: In areas in which there have been skills shortages or mismatches, we will have to look at the review to see how those can be addressed across the economy and how that information can be brought back into schools. Things such as real-time labour market information or closer-to-real-time labour market information could be used so that young people, parents, subject teachers, careers teachers and careers advisers all have up-to-date information.

Mr P Ramsey: I accept that, Michael. I am not interrupting you, but the Deputy Chair made an accurate point about the consistency and continuity of the role of careers advisers. What were you using until the inquiry commenced? What will you use now to progress it, highlighting the Committee's priorities?

Ms O'Hara: The role of a careers adviser in a school is to take young people from where they are at a certain point in time, and that varies depending on career maturity and on where they are. A careers adviser takes young people's abilities, aspirations and experiences, and any advice that they have gleaned to get them to that point, and, when possible, shapes and matches that to the current and future needs of the labour market. That is their role.

Youngsters are surrounded by people who can give them advice, lots of which is useful and influential. Parents give youngsters advice, and they get information from employers, teachers and all sorts of media sources. It is an adviser's role to look at where young people are and to help them to manage that rich, or limited, source of data to shape it into something that helps them to make informed decisions about their future career path. As Michael said, our key role is to make sure that that is informed by robust labour market developments.

The Deputy Chairperson: The inconsistencies were not with careers advisers; they were with careers teachers.

Mr P Ramsey: From my perspective, what you have said in the past few minutes could have been said six months ago. I want to know what you are doing differently now about providing additional information that will enhance a young person's opportunity for a career.

Ms O'Hara: The significant difference over the past year is that careers advisers are much more aware of the world of work. We have introduced, for example, five days' industry placements for all advisers so that they have much more exposure to what is happening in the world of work. Previously, we could have been criticised for being too interested in the aspirations and abilities of a young person, irrespective of future trends in the labour market. We have redressed that balance a bit over the past year, but we have much more to do.

Mr P Ramsey: Will you share any textual information that you have sent out to your careers advisers and shared with DE on the way forward as a result of the inquiry?

Mr Gould: To be honest, it is early days. We have taken your recommendations. It is a rich and deep source of data for us. We want to build on that as we go through the review. We will take your recommendations, and I think that our response shows that we agree with virtually every one of them, and we will include them as part of the review.

The terms of reference that we shared this morning reflect the chapters of the report, and, hopefully, you can see that we are taking seriously all the data and evidence that you gathered, and, in the next months, we will try to address those issues. However, it is a bit early in the process for us to be able to give you an exact solution to the problem that you identified.

The Deputy Chairperson: We will move on to recommendation 2.

Ms O'Hara: Recommendation 2 is about the entitlement framework, the improved choices open to students and the need to offer independent, impartial careers advice to help them to navigate their way through those choices. As we said in our response to the Committee, we understand that the entitlement framework, although offering an excellent opportunity for young people, with a much wider range of subject choices, presents certain problems for them helping to understand the implications of the choices that they may take. We are fully aware that the school that students are in may not be the best place to offer them that impartial, independent advice about what they should choose. Over the past few years, we have striven to see all year 12 pupils on a one-to-one basis. We have moved from a position of seeing in the low 60% to over 90% of year 12 students being seen by careers advisers on a one-to-one basis. We want to continue to increase that; we want to see 100% of year 12 students on a one-to-one basis, and the driver for that is to make sure that they are aware of the implications of the entitlement framework choices that they make.

The Deputy Chairperson: One issue in the recommendations that was raised by the colleges was that students in some schools are not being offered the full range of options envisaged by the entitlement framework. Some of those schools wish to retain students to A level, which is a difficulty that needs to be overcome. Will you comment on that?

Ms O'Hara: That is a risk. With schools offering a much broader range of subjects, there is a risk that young people may be encouraged to stay on at those schools when the best thing for them may be to move elsewhere. That is why the need for an impartial one-to-one interview at that point is more crucial than ever. That is why we want to see 100% of students.

The Deputy Chairperson: Are you satisfied that that will overcome that difficulty?

Ms O'Hara: Young people are influenced by lots of things. Their parents have a big role to play. Often, the expectation from parents is that they want or prefer their children to stay on at a school. As I said, we are coming at this from the perspective of balancing abilities and aspirations with current and future labour market needs. We will talk to them about that and the best route for them to fulfil their potential. If that means staying on at their existing school, that is fine; but if not, we will advise them accordingly.

The Deputy Chairperson: Fair enough. No other members have questions, so we will move on to recommendation 3.

Dr Hughes: Recommendation 3 is about ensuring that careers education is compulsory in the curriculum. The statutory duty to provide careers education is already in place.

The Deputy Chairperson: Do any members wish to comment on that? It would appear that the Department agrees with the recommendation, but it has not really responded to the actual recommendation that careers becomes a compulsory subject in the curriculum.

Dr Hughes: The curriculum is not defined by subject but by learning areas, and careers would be included in learning for life and work.

The Deputy Chairperson: We move on to recommendation 4.

Dr Hughes: As part of the wider review of the careers strategy, we expect to look at how careers education is made most effective lower down the school in years 8, 9 and 10. I will reflect back on the points that were made just now about the entitlement framework. There will be continuing work on communicating the meaning of the entitlement framework for all pupils to ensure that pupils and parents understand what the entitlement is for young people as they decide what subjects to follow and the pathways that are available to them.

The Deputy Chairperson: Nobody has indicated that they wish to ask a question, so we will move on to recommendation 5. You are getting an easy run this morning.

Dr Hughes: If I understand it correctly, I think that the Committee heard about particular practices that clearly impressed it. It is worth making the point that the Department of Education does not prescribe the way in which certain things are taught. Teachers are able to identify for themselves how they teach. Obviously, if there is good practice, it needs to be made more apparent or shared more widely.

The review of the strategy needs to take account of the role of sharing good practice between schools, so that schools doing well by their pupils inform those that have a way to go.

Mr P Ramsey: You said that there is a desire for a personal road map for each student. Was it not the case until now that you were going to have a "personal development portfolio", as it is termed here? A personal development portfolio for each child or young person was our recommendation. Was that the case prior to this?

Dr Hughes: I am not aware of where personal development portfolios are being used. I would not have sight of the actual operational practice in schools.

Mr P Ramsey: Clearly, it is a key recommendation. I know that it is difficult when it is the Department of Education's role, but I think that Frances said that there was going to be much more focus on personal development plans. Is that fair?

Ms O'Hara: Yes. At the moment, a record of the interview is given to the young person and shared with the school, so those plans are in place. I think that there is certainly scope to do more with those sorts of documents to make sure that they read into the next stage that the young person progresses to and are built on. We could look at that to make sure that the totality of the guidance and advice that young people are given is all documented and that they know that there is a progression.

Mr Douglas: My apologies for being late; I was at a funeral. In your response, you recognised the value of sharing good practice. Do you have any examples of good practice either in Northern Ireland or further afield?

Dr Hughes: I could not put my finger on specific practices that are operating in schools, but I do know how schools are already sharing practice in careers education. All post-primary schools and special schools are part of area learning communities, which all have a careers subgroup at which careers teachers meet to understand, apart from anything else, how careers are being taught and how different elements are being used in individual schools, and also to share good practice. For schools that find careers a struggle because they are not resourced to a certain level can see how other schools that are resourced and are prioritising careers are effecting and operationalising that. Seeing what other schools are doing and learning from the experience of others is one of the most effective ways for schools to improve their own practice.

Mr Douglas: I assume that good practice is not only inside schools but outside, with parents and communities supporting pupils. Is that the case?

Dr Hughes: Careers education in any school cannot be a matter of what happens inside a school only.

The Deputy Chairperson: The response to recommendation 5 notes that personal development portfolios will be considered but indicates that it does not prescribe approaches. The recommendation is not so much about careers advice as ensuring that schools develop students' allied skills to ensure that they are work-ready rather than just book-smart.

Dr Hughes: I am sorry if I am getting confused. The point I will make is that, although we do not prescribe pedagogical practice in schools, we encourage good practice to be shared. If good practices have been identified, it is important that those are made known.

The Deputy Chairperson: Fair enough. We will move on to recommendation 6.

Ms O'Hara: Recommendation 6 asks us to look at examples of good practice, including the evidence highlighted in the inquiry, such as that in Finland, where guidance is a compulsory subject in the curriculum. The Department, through the reviews that it is undertaking — the apprenticeship and traineeship reviews — has already established good relations with countries such as Finland, Switzerland, the Netherlands and, obviously the GB countries of Wales, Scotland and England. We are looking very closely at examples of good practice, and, so far, we are finding that there are some very good examples of aspects such as work experience in Switzerland. There are some good experiences in Finland and Denmark of pre-entry guidance before young people embark on training, for example, or further education beyond the age of 16. The pre-entry guidance is a prerequisite

before such pupils embark on a course. Those are the sorts of things that we are looking at so far. We can learn a lot and will certainly be doing that.

Mr Gould: It is a combination of desk research, which we can do on the Internet, and if there is something interesting in a certain area, we can actually make a visit using the contacts that we have built up.

The Deputy Chairperson: The Committee would like to be kept up to date on the examination of policies in other countries.

Mr P Ramsey: You could share examples of good practice with us as well.

Ms O'Hara: It may be worth noting that the Careers Service is represented on the European lifelong guidance policy network, which includes most of the European countries that are involved in the development of careers services. It also has links to an international symposium on careers guidance. Across the world, not just in Europe, we have found that a lot of countries are struggling with developing their services. The key thing that they all share is the need to match the abilities and aspirations of their people, whether young people or adults, with the future needs of the labour market. There is a lot of commonality across the world on those issues.

The Deputy Chairperson: We will move on to recommendation 7.

Mr Gould: The Committee recommends that we include the ongoing review of economic inactivity in the development of the economic inactivity strategy and include the role that the Careers Service should play in signposting those who are economically inactive into training, education and, ultimately, employment. We will make sure that, as we move through the review, we will join the dots with our colleagues in the employment service who are in the lead on the economic inactivity strategy.

Mr Buchanan: If members are happy enough with that, we will move on to recommendation 8.

Mr Gould: The Committee recommended that we look at the practical financial advice that is provided to potential and current students to ensure that the door to further and higher education is not closed to individuals because of cost. This will tie in with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's financial capability strategy; DETI is trying to make sure that individual citizens have a financial capability or ability in themselves to understand the financial implications of their actions. We will work to ensure that everybody understands the costs of further and higher education and how those costs can be mitigated so that people can make informed choices.

Mr P Ramsey: Clearly, the Committee has an interest in widening participation, which is a theme of this exercise. I would like a more progressive approach, particularly when we are going into a climate in which welfare reform will be hitting families hard across Northern Ireland, so that the fears about affordability will be examined thoroughly.

Mr Gould: I would definitely agree.

Mr Buchanan: We will move on to recommendation 9.

Ms O'Hara: Recommendation 9 is about making sure that we support people with learning difficulties to manage the transition into work. There is a suggestion that we should use employers and mentoring schemes and look at best practice elsewhere. We fully agree that that is a key piece of work that we can further develop. We put considerable resources into supporting young people with learning difficulties in particular, but not exclusively so. As part of the review, we will make sure that we join up with other agencies to help people to manage that transition, but using employers and mentoring schemes more, as well as role models from industry.

Mr P Ramsey: Again, I have an interest in this, particularly in learning disability. I want to see how the Department will introduce some level of targeting to ensure that more people with learning difficulties are able to go to further education or to the work market. So, I would like to see how you will progress this.

Ms O'Hara: As I said, we are acutely aware that this issue needs further work. We have developed good relationships with schools, including not only special needs schools but all schools with pupils with learning difficulties. That is because, increasingly, mainstream schools have a lot of pupils with learning difficulties. So, we have arrangements in place that mean that we can be involved in transition planning meetings and subsequent planning meetings so that the idea of maximising potential is there from day one. Raising aspiration is often the issue as well. That is why we particularly like the idea of mentoring, which, as you mentioned, is in the report. We will look at that and at using role models from industry to encourage young people who have learning difficulties to be aware of what they can achieve. That will be a key piece in the review.

Mr P Ramsey: Fundamentally, this is to give a bit of peace to a lot of parents. I encourage the Department to progress it to the stage of an event to encourage key ambassadors in industry who will bring people on and who have been mentoring people with disabilities or learning disabilities. Certainly, we would also be a part of that, in that we would have an event here that could encourage and motivate key industry players or small businesses to take that on. You are quite right to mention their confidence and aspirations.

Ms McGahan: On that point, one of the concerns that parents in my constituency raise is that their children have nowhere to go after the transition process finishes. So, you need to be cognisant of that, and, obviously, that will be flagged up in this inquiry on the provision for special educational needs. It is a very real problem, particularly in rural areas west of the Bann. I know that there are some good models in Belfast that we need to look at and to bring in to areas where there is no provision.

The Deputy Chairperson: I have no doubt that the Committee will revisit this when it is engaged in its new inquiry.

The Chairman has arrived, so I will hand over to him while you brief the Committee on recommendation 10.

(The Chairperson [Mr Swann] in the Chair)

Ms O'Hara: Recommendation 10 suggests that both Departments develop a strategy to identify and address the barriers facing female students going into careers that are based on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). On several occasions, the Minister in particular has talked about gender balance and the need to make sure that we attract more females into STEM-related careers. I suppose that that issue is not new and is not specific to Northern Ireland either. The STEM strategy also addresses gender balance.

Mr Gould: The STEM strategy is a joint strategy between us and five other Departments. We have taken a lead on it and have made a commitment this year to review the STEM strategy. As the Committee will be aware, there is a government subgroup and a business subgroup. The business subgroup in particular has taken the whole concept of gender equality as a major issue. It has worked with the Equality Commission, and it held a seminar in January, at which it was outlined what it believes is the best code of practice to create a gender balance, particularly in STEM subject areas and the sectors that rely on STEM. It is hoping to produce a code of practice for chief executive officers (CEOs) and business leaders that, hopefully, will make it easier for them to address the gender imbalance in the world of work and among the people who are coming into the world of work.

Action is also being taken in the ICT and engineering sectors in particular, which have experienced a strong gender imbalance. There is certainly an imbalance in female numbers in the workforce. Individual actions are being taken forward, and I can share information on that with members if they wish. Some of them are run by sector skills councils such as Semta, and others are run by e-skills. Some are web based. Semta is actually about getting women into engineering opportunities. So, we are aware of the issue and will work with the people who are doing the STEM review. We are part of the one team in the division.

The Chairperson: Is there enough coordination across all the strategies, Michael? I know that I raised the number of strategies that the Department has had in the past. Is there actually coordination across the whole sector or Departments, including DE, that will produce results rather than just statements?

Mr Gould: Yes, there are. I have just come from a meeting this morning on the engineering group. DE was represented there. So, although it may not be visible or seen on the surface, there is a lot of effort to join up and work together. We and DE, particularly in this area of careers, work very closely with DETI and Invest NI on the economic engagement. So, it does happen, Chairman.

The Chairperson: OK. Do members have any questions on point 10? If not, we will move on to recommendation 11.

Dr Hughes: This recommendation identifies the need for the emphasis that is being placed on STEM subjects in schools to include that insight into how it relates to the world of work and careers. I think that it makes a valuable point. With the review of the careers strategy and the forthcoming review of the STEM strategy, it is a point that will be brought out by the fact that those two reviews are running close together. The Department of Education funds a number of third-party organisations to run a variety of programmes in schools in support of business education, enterprise and entrepreneurship. There may well be the opportunity for greater synergy between those programmes and STEM programmes, which third-party organisations also run in schools.

The Chairperson: Thanks, David. I think that that is fair enough. The Department is taking on the recommendation.

OK, we will move to recommendation 12.

Dr Hughes: The intention to see improved uptake of STEM subjects has been there for some time. There is a target for a proportion of STEM A-level entries, for example, which we are on target to meet. That work will continue. I do not think that there is an expectation that we will see an early plateauing of that; rather, the focus will continue to be on the importance of those areas. How that can be addressed, again, needs to be brought up to date, there having been the STEM strategy for a number of years and its being time to review that and to look forward to the next period. Certainly, the Committee's recommendations will be taken on board in that context.

The Chairperson: There is a 5% target in that recommendation. What percentage has been achieved to date?

Dr Hughes: I was conscious as I was rereading this note that I do not actually have that figure in front of me. However, I can check to make sure that we have the full set of figures.

The Chairperson: OK. If members have nothing to add, we will move on to recommendation 13.

Ms O'Hara: This is the recommendation on the development of outcome measures to enable the Assembly and wider public to evaluate success, particularly our success in STEM, and to provide a level of assurance that we are being responsive to the needs of the economy. Again, the issue of impact and measurement is something that all the career services across the world seem to be grappling with at present. Our current measures are very much of activity and outputs in terms of the number of people whom we see and, indeed, what happens to them and where they progress to. We also have measurements on customer-satisfaction levels between adults and young people. We also have the matrix standard, which is the external assessment from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in England. However, we know that that is not enough. Those are broad brush, and we would prefer much more tangible outcome measures, particularly for STEM and on making sure that we are delivering to the needs of the economy. So, we welcome that recommendation, and it will be taken forward as a key piece in the review.

Mr Gould: It may be worth adding that the Department has, in the Programme for Government, targets relating specifically to STEM uptake. In the skills strategy, 'Success through Skills — Transforming Futures', there is also a specific target for increasing STEM uptake.

Mr Lyttle: I think that it is an interesting topic. The ETI obviously inspects careers provision, but at what point do we survey people who are, say, 10 years out of school to see what their thoughts are about the careers guidance that they received? What are some of the key outcome measurements at this moment in time to evaluate the success or otherwise of careers guidance?

Ms O'Hara: From our Department, there are no longitudinal studies. The outcome measures that we look at are the number of people we have seen and where they progressed to in the short term after

leaving school, whether that was at 16 or 18. You are right to highlight the impact issue, which is looking at the steps that people take as a result of the guidance that they received over a five- to 10-year period or whatever. That is something that we will be looking at.

As I said, it is not unique to us. Lots of careers services across the world are looking at this issue. One of the problems is that there is rarely just one reason why people do or do not take a particular career path. There can be lots of other factors. Nonetheless, it is accepted that we need more tangible and transparent outcome measures.

Mr Lyttle: I think that that is important. An issue that we came across in the inquiry was the short-term nature of the assessment of outcomes. We hear frequently that there is a need to adjust our understanding of and outlook on education, training and employment to being a lifelong continuum. At the moment, too many sections of that continuum are content if they progress someone to the next section, rather than stepping back and everybody looking together at the wider outcomes for an individual over a longer period. So, it is encouraging to know that you will be looking at that as part of the review.

The Chairperson: The Department of Education commissioned a £1.2 million mobile teaching laboratory and workshop. How is that used across boards or schools?

Dr Hughes: It is managed from one board, but schools across the entire jurisdiction use it. It is in use constantly. It is driven to a school and can be set up in a number of configurations, depending on how it is being used in the school on that occasion. Occasionally, it is parked outside here if there is an event. I have certainly seen it here. It was also used, for example, at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition in Dublin. It contains kit that no school is likely to have the resources to have for itself. As a result, it tends to be a whole lot more exciting than even regular classes. It can be taken down a particular scientific, technology or engineering route, depending on what the school wants to use on that occasion. From what we hear, I think that, if there could be five or 10 of them, no one would complain. It is an enormous resource.

The Chairperson: How do schools bid for or book it?

Dr Hughes: I must admit that I do not know the process that they go through, but I am aware —

The Chairperson: Is it the same schools using it?

Dr Hughes: No, I think there is an effort to ensure that it is shared fairly and does not get monopolised. However, it will clearly be of particular value to smaller schools, perhaps, where the degree of material available in the school is more limited.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Next is recommendation 14.

Dr Hughes: I will respond to the point about ensuring that schools are adequately resourced. I mentioned the STEM trials, but, ultimately, the local management of schools means that it is for the schools to determine how their budget is allocated.

Mr Buchanan: I appreciate that the budget is delegated to schools and that they use it as they see fit, but, given that careers advice is so important in schools, has not the time come to ask all schools to set aside so much to ensure that they have a proper careers advice system to guide and direct young people into the right sphere of employment? It is all very well saying that we will leave it to schools to manage their own budget and that they can put into careers advice whatever they wish. We have seen that, in some schools, careers advice has been the Cinderella of the school. In some areas, trying to get young people into the right course of employment has proved disastrous. So has the time not come for some direction to be given to schools on the matter?

Dr Hughes: I am not necessarily sure that ring-fencing an element of the budget for a particular purpose in that way would be effective in achieving the legitimate aim that you set out, which is to ensure that every school is providing a good level of careers education. I think that the fact that careers education is inspected and that, therefore, there is focus on it in inspection, is a very effective way of ensuring that schools are focusing on its value. The importance that parents and pupils place on good careers advice as a child goes through school is, I think, a critical lever in ensuring that the careers education is up to scratch. Ultimately, it will be for the school leadership to determine how the

school's budget is spent, which is a very important principle. However, it is not that the principal of the school is taking arbitrary decisions; rather, he or she is taking decisions that are in line with what the school needs to do. Boards of governors are also critical in that regard.

Mr Lyttle: Why is ring-fencing the budget not effective, and why is the publication of reports effective?

Dr Hughes: I am possibly not the person to give you the theology of the local management of schools; that is not my area of responsibility in the Department. However, as a general rule, the most effective way to see schools perform at their highest level — this can be seen internationally — is to give the greatest degree of autonomy to schools plus the greatest degree of accountability that is commensurate with that autonomy. What are the outcomes that the school is producing in the education that it is providing? It is about allowing the leadership of the school to determine how that should be achieved. Every school is quite different. Therefore, the allocation of resources in a school is a very nuanced and carefully achieved exercise. To withdraw autonomy in an area does not give the leadership of the school the ownership of responsibility for the outcomes.

You made the observation that there will be those schools where the provision of careers education is not of the highest standard, and you identified that that may well largely be about the significance that the school leadership gives to it. If the Department of Education determined that the school leadership was no longer responsible for allocating money but that the Department was, you would be taking it away from even those leaders who do believe that it is an important area of responsibility. You would be removing the head teacher's autonomy and authority.

I know that that is not an immediately compelling response to what I think could be a very straightforward reaction to getting more resource to careers education, but, in the long term, I think that it is shown in education systems internationally that the greater autonomy of schools is the most effective way of ensuring that they are delivering.

Mr Lyttle: It is an interesting and important debate, and I think that I understand where the Deputy Chair is coming from. The line about autonomy is the prevailing one, especially on careers education, information, advice and guidance. I am struggling to see why you would need it to vary so greatly across schools. Maybe there are other subject areas where the need for autonomy is greater, but it seems to me that there should be some form of core template for delivery that schools could be required to put in place. I think that this is something that can run. However, I think that you are getting a particular view from the Committee, so, hopefully, that can be examined in a bit more detail in the review.

You also mentioned the word "outcomes". We discussed today that there may be a need to look at exactly what that is. Maybe what outcomes a school is seeking could influence what work the school is required to undertake. If it is just to move someone on to the next stage, I would hazard that that would skew the relevance of the careers guidance that is also being offered. So, it is an interesting debate, Chair. Thank you.

The Chairperson: I think that you could feed that back to the review, David, because there are so many other things that principals do not have autonomy in. Perhaps careers guidance and advice needs to be tightened.

Mr Buchanan: If this review is to mean anything and is to be effective and to deliver what we have set out for it to deliver on, I think that it must be at the highest standard in all the schools. To deliver, it must be placed in that key position at the highest standard in the school. I do not accept that, following on from this, there may well be schools that will not have it at that level. I think that that is where it has to be placed.

The Chairperson: OK. We will move on to recommendation 15.

Ms O'Hara: This is the proposal that we develop a fit-for-purpose careers website that is similar to My World of Work in Scotland and the Careers Portal in the Republic of Ireland. We have already started work on this, and it is something that we recognised needed further development. We want to look at much more online and multimedia channel delivery, and the driver for that is to make sure that we offer a service to people in a way that suits them and at a time that suits them. We feel that the best way to do that is to make best use of the technology that is available. It is also a way that a lot of young people want to operate now, so we need to keep ahead of the curve on that one. There is also an excellent careers website in Wales, and Scotland is looking to modify its own slightly along the

same lines as that in Wales. We are already working closely with them. So, that is something that will be a key feature of the review.

To go back to the personal development portfolio, there could be an opportunity through the use of the website and an interactive channel for us to offer a personal portfolio online. It would be a live document for the individual that is portable, and they could keep it with them wherever they go. So, the type of thing that we will be looking at will involve moving away from a paper-based into an electronic-based system.

The Chairperson: Frances, when you say that that work has started, can you tell us what sort of resource have you allocated to it, and what is the timeline for completion?

Ms O'Hara: We have engaged with NI Direct, which would be the main delivery agent for this in the Department. We have put a senior member of my team on to this. It is not his exclusive job, but it takes up around 50% of his time at the minute. Historically, these things can take a long time to work through and develop. We envisage a three-year line for this to get it to where we would want to be. It will have to be costed. We have asked an independent contractor to look at a costed model of what we should be putting in place, looking at best practice elsewhere. We hope to have the report on that by the summer, and then we will have to bid for the money to put that costed model in place. That could probably take a further 18 months. So, we could be talking about from two and a half to three years before we have the final piece in place, and that is assuming that our bid for the money is successful. These things take time to build and develop, because external contractors are involved.

The Chairperson: So, when your statement says that you have started work, you mean that you have really started to think about it?

Mr Gould: To be honest, Chairman, it is more active than that. As Frances says, we have commissioned technical consultants. A lot of this is about the technical software and its development. That person has been commissioned. We are working with NI Direct, which is the government interface with its citizens, so it has to fit on to that platform. We want to be able to do the things that, I think, the Committee wants to see, as in the Scottish and Welsh examples. We want to have the interactivity that we have not had in the past. So, we are doing more than just thinking about it; we have commissioned somebody to give us technical advice. As Frances says, we will then have to make a business case to develop the full portal. However, it is our intention, with a fair wind and financing, to be able to do that.

Ms O'Hara: It is worth saying that, in the interim, we have a website that we ensure is as good as we can make it. It is the second-most-used service on NI Direct, after, I think, MOTs. Given that we have all to go through our MOTs but do not all necessarily have to access careers guidance, we are quite pleased about that. Obviously, the existing service hits the mark for a lot of people. However, we know that it could be better. We will continue to update our website and to put whatever we can on it to maximise its potential, restricted as it is. As Michael says, it is not as interactive as we would like to be, but we will continue to maintain it as we develop the new one.

The Chairperson: Recommendation 16 is about engagement with parents. I think that we have all highlighted that in the past, even through careers guidance on apprenticeships, in a number of strategies that the Department is bringing forward.

Ms O'Hara: Yes. We see parents' involvement as critical, given their influence on young people. We mentioned the idea of staying on at school or transferring to another one. Parents often have a very specific view on that. We feel that it is almost as important to educate the parents about the risks and rewards of the career choices that young people have to make as it is to educate the young people themselves.

We have done some work on this. We issued a parental guide last year, and we also have a parents' portal on the existing website. Again, that is not as good as we would like it to be, but we will continue to develop it. We expect that there will be much more information available for parents down the line, especially with the new website. However, even in advance of that, we want to put labour market information on to the existing website in a way that is easily accessible and understood by parents. We feel that that is the best way to influence parents, who can then influence their young people, about the importance of looking to the future labour market trends so that their children make career decisions based on those lines.

The Chairperson: I remember that the parents' guide was launched towards the end of 2013, just as our inquiry was getting into the nuts and bolts of things. There were cynics on the Committee who thought that it had been launched as a knee-jerk reaction to our inquiry — or was it maybe to support it, Michael?

Mr Gould: It was more to support it.

The Chairperson: I thought that would be the phrase you would use. As a guide for parents, is it interactive and engaging enough? Have you had any feedback?

Ms O'Hara: It took a long time to develop that guide, even though it is a simple four- or five-page booklet. We developed it in association with Parenting NI. What has sprung from that is that we have a commitment now to have local engagement with parenting groups in various areas around Northern Ireland. We already engage with parents through parents' evenings. We attend most of the parents' evenings in schools, and parents can see that we are there and available to the children throughout the year. We have distributed that parental guide through the schools, as well. It was sent out to all schools. It is a measure of how well it was used that we had to do a further run because we were asked for more copies. So, we have had some anecdotal feedback that it has been well used and well received, but we know that we need to do more on parental engagement. It is a key issue.

The Chairperson: You mentioned that the careers advice portal was second only to the MOT portal. How widely is the parent section of the portal used?

Ms O'Hara: The answer to that is that I do not know. I am not sure that we can get that level of detail on it, because it is about hits on the website. However, I will look at that. We might be able to get more detail on the people who go on to the parents' portal.

The Chairperson: It would be interesting to see whether there is interaction there. Members, anything on 16? OK? Recommendation 17.

Mr Gould: Recommendation 17: the Committee recommended we make labour market information more accessible and develop a more joined-up approach to information, sharing it with key stakeholders. We agree. We recognise that, if people had more up-to-date labour market information, that is perhaps one measure that could address some of the skills mismatches within the economy. We will use the review, and perhaps the review of apprenticeships, to see if we can come forward with a mechanism to give us a better indication as to, say, annual demand in the various sectors for new entry jobs and replacement demand. Hopefully, in that way, we will be able to find a better way to disseminate it as well.

The Chairperson: Do members have anything on 17? OK; 18.

Dr Hughes: The Committee has rightly recognised that there is a challenge in ensuring that pupils are able to access valuable work experience while they are at school. There is variety in the way in which that is provided to and experienced by pupils. That is a consequence of different approaches being taken in different areas at different times. There is some effort to ensure that additional resource is provided by the Department to support third-party organisations that work in this area. However, we know that that is not a universal provision. I come back to the point about the way in which schools use their budget and the local management of schools arrangements, but at the same time recognise that, even with that, support for the provision of work experience will need to be looked at very carefully in the light of the strategy and the review of the strategy.

The Chairperson: Is there any room for a ring-fenced initiative on work experience?

Dr Hughes: I am not necessarily sure whether ring-fencing resources in that area would achieve what you are — what is required is the organisation, the access to contacts and the approach taken, and that needs greater scrutiny. The use of work experience needs to be taken forward as part of the overall delivery of careers education in schools. That is going to be an important part of the work.

The Chairperson: Just to clarify, from your response it seems that each education and library board has its own policy or guidance on work experience. Would it not be better to have a departmental policy?

Dr Hughes: It is an operational matter as to how it is operated in schools, not a matter that would be determined centrally by the Department. That is why boards have that role. However, I think greater unity in the way in which boards operate would always be advantageous.

Mr Lyttle: Can I supplement that? Why do you need autonomy on work experience?

Dr Hughes: It is autonomy in the way in which money is spent.

Mr Lyttle: How much money is spent on work experience?

Dr Hughes: I am not aware of what resources might be used in individual schools.

Mr Lyttle: I think this is another area that does not seem like it needs a great deal of autonomy but needs a great deal of coordination in terms of the value that the pupil gets out of the experience, the ease of interaction for the employer and the uniformity of the way in which businesses and organisations can know how to interact with something like work experience. In our experience, we hear from employers who are willing to interact with something like work experience, but it is wholly inconsistent and non-uniform across the board as to how they actually do that. If there was a greater degree of consistency and coordination, then you might have much more valuable work experiences for young people, as well. Maybe that is something that can be looked into.

The Chairperson: David, I note from your response that the Department currently funds School Employer Connections and Charter work experience. Those are in two different boards, is that correct?

Dr Hughes: They operate in different areas.

The Chairperson: Is there not a rationale for funding the same across all areas?

Dr Hughes: That is where those organisations operate. We fund organisations to operate, and they operate in those areas. Those organisations are not universal. They do not operate everywhere.

The Chairperson: Can you not ask them to expand, or put the funding in to put them in all areas?

Dr Hughes: There will always be a challenge to find additional resource.

Ms McGahan: On the back of your point, Chair, I know that, in some areas, the onus is on pupils to look for their own work experience and, if they do not get it, they sit at home for that week during their holiday period. Do you have any concerns about that or about how we can get teachers to be more proactive in assisting pupils? I know that, in those particular areas, there is a focus on helping students who want to go into the medical profession to get work experience, but the same service is not provided for anybody who wants to go into law, and the onus is on them. Are you aware of that going on?

Ms O'Hara: I think that strays into recommendation 19 as well. I think you are absolutely right. The ad hoc approach to work experience is not something that we think is meaningful. I know that the Minister for Employment and Learning is very keen on the area of work experience. He wants to see much more cohesion and a more meaningful approach to the work experience issue. There is a great opportunity to have a much more robust approach to how work experiences are organised. I say work experiences, because we do not want it to be just a one-off.

Work experiences can be formal and informal, but the key thing is to make sure that, whatever value the young person gets out of them, it is discussed with them and is used to help them to make informed choices in the future. That is something that the CBI and other employers' representatives are keen to work with us on. So, a key feature of the review going forward will be how we make the work experience system more robust and meaningful to the young person so that we can get tangible outcomes from work experience.

It is a big commitment for a young person, especially the able youngsters who are thinking about medicine and law, etc. For parents to see the value of them taking a week or whatever out of school to go and do a week of work experience, there has to be some tangible outcome at the end of it, and we have to demonstrate that. The other thing is about the inequality point. We have to make sure

that, irrespective of whether you have those family connections or not, you have the same exposure and opportunities as people who have them. A brokerage system could perhaps be introduced to make the whole work experience arena a bit more fair and meaningful. That is something that we will look closely at as part of the review.

Mr Gould: At a strategic level, the engagement from all parts of the education system is a much bigger issue. We have schools looking for placements and, anecdotally, I understand that pupils are being left on their own to try to make their own arrangements. There is a big resource required in getting placements and making sure that those placements are of good quality, both for the employer or the business that takes the person on and also from the individual's perspective — that they are not at risk with regard to health and safety and other misuse issues. We have it within full-time further education, and we have identified through the review of youth training that work placements are one of the most successful ways of getting people who are not employed onto training courses and into the world of work. In higher education, we know that those individuals who take a year out or do a work placement through their degree programme are more likely to be employable, and their grades at the end of their degree will be higher.

Every element of the education system is trying to touch into businesses and the world of work, and we need to have a much more coordinated or joined-up way of doing that, not least in case the businesses get turned off and they are under pressure all the time to accommodate visits and placements and are asked to come out and talk to schoolchildren as well. It is a two-way process that needs better management and coordination. Unfortunately, I do not have an easy answer. I know the issue, but I have not been able to come up with an easy answer or solution yet.

The Chairperson: Is that not what School Employer Connections does?

Mr Gould: The school sector is only one element of the interaction between education and the business world.

The Chairperson: David, do you want in on this? I know that work experience is something that you raised throughout the inquiry.

Mr Hilditch: Yes, it was very topical with the people from the private sector who appeared before the Committee, and they were less than happy. There are examples throughout Northern Ireland that are shambolic. It was not coming across well at all, and some of my own personal experiences within my constituency were shocking. Kids were cleaning up playgrounds with black bin liners and litter picks. Something has to be done at some stage to try to up the ante a bit on it.

Dr Hughes: Michael makes the point that there is a wider issue here, and I would even raise it further than that. Certainly in the schools sector, we are seeing a change towards far greater permeability in and out of schools, access to schools by employers and familiarity with schools by employers, but likewise familiarity with local employers by schools. That is changing, and in some schools it is very strong. It is not just about work experience; it is about all aspects of what the school is doing. Visibility of what the school is doing and visibility of the employers around the school, or employers who have connections to the school, makes a huge difference, not just to the employability of young people coming through and their perspective on the world of work but actually to utterly unrelated experience of school and educational outcomes. Some of the most impressive turnarounds in schools that have been struggling have been where there has been a newly developed close relationship between the school and local employers, because when employers are making that connection for them, it makes a difference to the young person's understanding of what they are doing five days a week.

Mr Hilditch: Some of them do not even get the full five days; some of them are down to two or three days. Even if they are lucky and get on with an employer somewhere — we know about all these potential vacancies in certain areas of employment — they are still going on to be either teachers or hairdressers, which was the usual thing from the 80s and 90s right through. There is no change and no guidance in the advice. The advice must not be — I do not know. As Michael said, I think that we need a bigger overview of the whole thing. Point made.

The Chairperson: We have touched on recommendation 19. Have you anything else to say on that? No? Happy enough? You are just looking forward to the review. Recommendation 20, then?

Ms O'Hara: This recommends that both Departments in the planned strategy examine how career-related learning between schools and businesses can be improved. It is similar to the work experience issue. It is using mentoring, role models and good examples of the world of work so that we can influence young people to make the right choices. David may want to say something about that. There is an opportunity through the area learning communities to develop relationships between schools and businesses.

Dr Hughes: Yes; this is the point that I was coming to in my previous comments about the impact that can be achieved in many different ways as a result of connections between schools and employers. Obviously, there are a lot of schools, and employers will want to make sure that any connections they have with schools are a manageable commitment from their side.

There will be instances where the connection needs to be effective between a particular employer and a particular school, and there will be other instances where the connection needs to be made between the employer and a cluster of local schools. The fact that all post-primary schools belong to area learning communities is a very useful element of the ability of employers to engage with schools. We have heard anecdotally of instances where employers or representatives of industry sectors have asked the Department, "Can you give me the names and contact details of the chairs of each of the area learning communities, because we can probably manage 30", or the six nearest their headquarters, or whatever it is. That makes the engagement with the schools more manageable. It also means that employers are not being put into a corner and having to ask whether there is a particular type of school that they should be engaging with. The area learning communities cover all post-primary schools and, therefore, the connection can be made to all the schools in an area.

The Chairperson: OK. It goes back to David's point; a number of businesses came in front of us, and the CBI and even Matrix said that connections needed to be improved and professionalised. That should probably be part of the review, and we will look forward to their findings.

Members, anything else on 20? Recommendation 21?

Ms O'Hara: This is about evaluation of good practice and partnership models between schools, the private sector, the voluntary and community sectors and businesses. It is about a partnership arrangement to share good practice. I am not sure that we have given it much consideration but again, the area learning communities might be the vehicle through which we could take this forward.

Dr Hughes: There are instances of particular schools with particular employers where the experience has been immensely positive. We need to see some evaluation of some of those instances to establish the degree to which or the areas in which that connection between the employer and the school has had the greatest effect, whether it is mentoring of exam-age students or contact outside the school and visits or whatever it is. That would be enormously helpful.

The Chairperson: Members, anything else on 21? OK; 22, then.

Mr Gould: Yes, Chair.

The Chairperson: Not agreed.

Mr Gould: This is an area on which we had some differing views. On the DEL side, we believe that the careers advisers are adequately resourced in terms of people. We have had an increase in the number of careers advisers employed through the recession to cope with the larger number of unemployed people whom we have to see and give careers advice to. We believe that they are highly competent and highly professional individuals. They come with a postgraduate qualification; they come with their graduate qualification, and then are sent for further professional education in guidance for their postgraduate year. They come back to us, then, with a postgraduate qualification, and we spend a lot of time and money on their professional development throughout the year. They get nine full days of professional development throughout the year, five of which are on work placement in companies or other organisations. They spend the other four full days collectively together to be updated on best practice etc.

We did not understand or see where the Committee was coming from on the need for more qualifications and for more people with experience coming into the careers service.

The Chairperson: Do you have a view on that, David?

Dr Hughes: I am not sure whether we have any observations to make around careers advisers.

The Chairperson: I do not know whether there is a misunderstanding or a misreading of this, but when you put the recommendation in the context of the report, the recommendation was in regard to formal qualifications for teachers. We accepted Michael's point in the report under paragraph 286, and we noted a difference of approach, but this was about the formal qualifications of careers teachers rather than careers advisers. We noted from a number of presentations that, in the Republic of Ireland, a careers teacher must have a qualification to teach careers, in the same way as a history teacher must have a qualification to teach history, but there has not been the same qualification up here for the past 10 years. It was the establishment of that qualification, to commence with, and then the Department of Education taking it on board and making sure that the careers teachers were properly qualified.

Dr Hughes: Right. In which case we may have responded out of sync with the observations that the Committee was making.

The Chairperson: Is that something that you want to take away and come back to the Committee with?

Dr Hughes: Yes.

The Chairperson: When you put the recommendation in the context of the full report, it clarifies that. Members, have you anything to add? No? OK. So we might agree yet, Michael.

Mr Gould: Absolutely.

The Chairperson: Recommendation 23, then.

Dr Hughes: On this one, we are pressing ahead to ensure that the CPD modules are delivered as soon as possible. We recognise that it has not been as fast as we or anyone would have liked, but nevertheless we recognise the importance of getting that done.

The Chairperson: I suppose the question that all politicians ask when they hear that it is not going quick enough is, "Do you have a timeline for it?"

Dr Hughes: I do not have a timeline at present.

The Chairperson: When you say that it is not moving fast enough, do you have a target?

Dr Hughes: No, I am afraid that at the moment I cannot come to you with an indication of the target for which we are aiming.

The Chairperson: When you say that you cannot give me it, is it because you do not have the information here or because you do not have one in the Department?

Dr Hughes: To be absolutely honest, I do not know whether there is one, but it has not been raised to me.

The Chairperson: OK. So we can write to you and get clarification on it.

Dr Hughes: Yes.

The Chairperson: OK. Members, anything else on recommendation 23? Recommendation 24, then.

Dr Hughes: There is a very helpful point being made by the Committee, which will need to be looked at quite seriously in the context of the review of the strategy. There is already a degree to which teachers in all subject areas will be encouraged and supported in making the connection between their

subject and careers. I am very aware of that, having seen the way in which that is presented in a lot of schools. It may not be universal, but it may be something that could be encouraged further.

The Chairperson: I know that careers provision in schools is part of the ETI inspection. Is there something that can be used through that mechanism? I know that Chris raised that earlier.

Dr Hughes: I would have to check with inspectors as to the range of issues that they are looking at. In the course of an inspection, they look at careers education. I would be surprised if they were not also looking at how all subject areas and teaching areas are covering the connection to careers, but I must admit that I do not know precisely.

The Chairperson: There is no reluctance in the Department to take this forward?

Dr Hughes: No, I think that it is consistent with the place of careers education in the curriculum that it is not simply limited to a careers education block in the timetable, but, rather, is part of a curriculum that has cross-cutting elements. There will be elements in careers education that can be expected to be taught in other subject areas.

The Chairperson: OK. Members, anything on 24? Recommendation 25?

Mr Gould: We agree with your recommendations, and we want to seek out those who have contributed to the rich source of data and evidence that you provided in the report. We will ensure that the independent panel has access to those individuals and hears first-hand from as many as possible in the course of the review.

The Chairperson: OK. Thank you very much. Do you want to touch on the draft terms of reference for the careers review?

Mr Gould: I will set out what we plan to do with the terms of reference and the structures. We would like to build on our success with the reviews of apprenticeships and youth training. We will have a small dedicated team and, around it, an independent panel of experts. We will use the draft terms of reference, which we have unashamedly plagiarised from your report —

The Chairperson: We noticed.

Mr Gould: — because we see that as a rich source of data. In many ways, we see that as what needs to be done, and we want the panel and the review process to show us how we will do it. So, that is how we plan to take it forward.

The terms of reference are still in draft form and are subject to ministerial agreement. We are hopeful that that will come in due course, and we can then kick off the review formally.

The Chairperson: OK. When will the panel be established or the terms of reference formalised by the Minister? Do you know?

Mr Gould: I do not have an exact timeline on that. We are working with two Departments, so I cannot give you an exact date.

Ms O'Hara: I think that the Minister is keen to hear the views of the Committee, as well. The terms of reference are in draft form pending today's discussion. If the Committee has any views or you think that we have not reflected your recommendations enough, have left things out or whatever, we are happy to take on board whatever views you want to feed through to us.

The Chairperson: Yes, if you feel that anything from the discussions about the recommendations of the inquiry have been missed from the terms of reference. You may also want to come back to the Committee. We appreciate the feedback on the recommendations, because it has given value to the work that the Committee has undertaken. People came before us and gave evidence. As the terms of reference for the review reflect our inquiry, I think that it was a very worthwhile piece of work. If the Committee can do anything to support either Department in this work, we are more than happy to do that and can make available any of the research and stuff that we completed during the inquiry.

Mr Gould: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Members, anything else on this issue? No? Michael, David and Frances, thank you very much for your time.